

Minutes for Ward 6 NPA
March 5, 2020

The meeting began at 6:30. Steering Committee members Matt Grady, Michelle Mraz, Gail Rafferty and Joel Fitzgerald were present.

Public Comment

The concern was raised that Ward 6 is short one Inspector of Elections and also does not have a Ward Clerk. If anyone is interested in either of these paid positions, they can contact the city clerk's office. There is a newly founded organization in town called the Vermont Institute of Community and International Involvement- VICII. The organization is promoting civic engagement and educational events/dialogue. Upcoming events will be on Wednesday nights from 6 to 8 PM at the O.N.E. Community Center on Allen St. Website: <https://www.vicii.org/>

Call for Ward 6 Steering Committee Members

Matt Grady explained that all Steering Committee members are up for re-election every year. This year there will be two vacancies on the Steering Committee – Ward 6 will elect a minimum of two new Steering Committee members at the May meeting. Folks are encouraged to consider joining the Steering Committee. More information on Steering Committee responsibilities can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1q0wEaK8QQjOznp3N-qpgPP60ivjaXNbs/view>

State Legislative Update

Tim Ashe - President Pro Tempore, Vermont State Senate

- Minimum Wage Bill was passed this session with a 2 year increase to \$12.55. The bill probably would not have passed if the amount had been higher – the veto override was successful.
- Legislation has passed called Justice Reinvestment II, attempting to address the issue that the vast majority of our inmates get sent back while on furlough or probation for technical violations. This legislation is aimed to stop the automatic process of being sent back to prison - aiming to cut in half the number of Vermont's out of state inmates.
- A bill has passed to put restrictions on student loan servicing companies, especially in the public service loan forgiveness program which has denied loan forgiveness to most students.
- There is legislation to promote afterschool opportunities throughout the state.
- Firearms safety - the House is focusing on ways to better protect people in a domestic violence situation, and introduce waiting periods before a gun purchase can be made.

- Energy legislation - there is a transportation and climate initiative creating a regional compact which would work on a guaranteed reduction in transportation emissions. The House just passed the Global Warming Solutions Act which would accelerate the date by which utilities increase their renewable energy sources.
- Additionally, there is pollinator friendly legislation - banning chemicals that hurt pollinators.

Questions raised:

Have marijuana convictions in VT been reversed? With decriminalization and then legalization, VT courts had already stopped incarceration for marijuana possession. VT has not had a lot of people in prison for marijuana. Medication Assisted Treatment for addictions is being offered in the prisons.

With adequate housing a condition for inmate release, what is being done to address that? The money saved in reducing the prison population will be spent on securing better transitional and treatment housing so that prisoners can be released when their minimum sentences are done.

Will minimum wage legislation just result in inflation? Senator Ashe indicated that could be a result, but the sum total of the effect on VT's GDP will be negligible according to the economists at the state. The pay for about 40,000 positions in the state will go up, and some positions may be eliminated over time. It was also noted that in Chittenden County many employers are already offering over \$12.55 as a starting wage.

DPW Storm Water

Jenna Olsen, Rob Goulding, James Sherrard

Storm Water Mitigation projects in the South End will begin this spring and summer. They will address the Pine Street combined sewer overflow. The South End work will be installations of 15 rain gardens and will be able to manage runoff for 6 acres of impervious surface. (Total project citywide when completed will manage 15 acres of impervious surface.) Residents can go to the DPW website to see specifics. There is a meeting scheduled for March 31st at 6 PM at 645 Pine St. to discuss the project. Letters will be sent to property owners in the neighborhoods the week of March 9, 2020. Question was asked about pedestrian routes through these "bump out" gardens? Pedestrian and bike safety has been taken in to account in the planning. Where are the locations? Go to the website and specific locations will be indicated.

Youth Restorative Practice - Community Justice Center

Virginia Litchfield

Burlington is looking at the concept of becoming a "Restorative City" for youth. Restorative practices focus on relationship building and making community connections. Studies show that many youth in VT feel they do not matter to their community. Restorative practices look to turn that around, by emphasizing relationships, and avenues

for repairing harm. For more information go to www.burlingtoncjc.org. Or you can contact Virginia Litchfield at vlitchfield@burlingtonvt.gov

2020 Census

Bob Stock

In a week the 2020 Census will begin. The census determines representation in Congress, and also determines funding for 55 major programs – such as Medicaid, Section 8, School Lunch, etc. It is important to successfully count everyone in VT. Personal information is not shared with anyone, including Homeland Security, and ICE. The Census this time can be conducted on the Internet, or the phone. Trusted members of hard to reach communities are being solicited to reach harder to count members of our community. The US Census is still hiring for this current Census. Part-time and full-time positions are still open. People will receive census mailings in about a week. On the website - 2020Census.gov - residents can track responses for their own neighborhood.

City Council Update

Karen Paul and Joan Shannon

- The roundabout on Shelburne Rd. will begin in earnest soon - anticipated construction beginning in January 2021 and completed in 2022.
- Memorial Auditorium plans are in motion. The city is in discussions with a potential operator. Plan is to potentially put forward something concrete by early fall, with a bond vote in November.
- City Place developers held a second public meeting last week. Permitting process issues will come before Wards 2 and 3 NPA's. The timeline for the project includes an August 2020 start with completion anticipated 2nd quarter of 2023.
- City Hall Park is ahead of schedule. Plan is that by late August City Hall Park will be opened. At <https://enjoyburlington.com/> there is a time lapsed footage people can view of park construction.
- Redistricting will also be happening after this current census, and Karen stressed the importance of filling out the census information.
- Moran plant update – there is more remediation needed than expected on the building. The initial TIF \$ will not be enough - this will now be done in Phases. Phase One will start in the spring and conclude the following year. CEDO will be looking for additional funds.
- Ordinance was passed for Accessory Dwelling Units to be allowed (ADU's) in an owner - occupied house with no additional parking required. Additional lot coverage will also be allowed.

- BT reinvestment – Joan spoke about voting against the city reinvest, and has written up her reasons for doing so. If you would like a copy of that, please contact Joan Shannon.
- Winooski Transportation Corridor plan will be voted on at the next City Council Meeting. This would change Winooski Ave. to allow for bike lanes, greater safety for cars, pedestrians, and bikes. There will be parking spaces removed in various places along Winooski Ave. There is a parking management plan not yet completely finalized. Joan is concerned about voting before seeing that parking management plan. There may also be changes proposed in the traffic pattern in and out of City Market.
- New police chief update: Job was posted a couple weeks ago – it will stay open until it is filled. A hiring committee is being organized. There have been a number of applicants. Karen is estimating it may be approximately May 1st when the process concludes.

There was a question about the second gym being planned at the new BHS for community space. Is there truly a need for community space given the other community spaces in the city? The plan is still a work in progress and the councilors did not have an answer for that, as that is the purview of the School Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.